

## SLAUGHTER BY FIRE.

## A ST. LOUIS HOTEL BURNED.

DESTRUCTION OF THE SOUTHERN HOTEL—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE GUESTS—FEARS THAT MANY PERISHED IN THE FLAMES.

The Southern Hotel, one of the largest and finest hotels in St. Louis, was burned yesterday morning. The fire was discovered at 1:25 a. m., and in less than an hour it was a heap of ruins. The terrified inmates, on being roused from sleep, were met by clouds of smoke, which filled the halls and rendered escape difficult. Many were rescued by means of ladders, and some threw themselves from windows or let themselves down by ropes and bedclothes torn into strips. Six men were killed by jumping from windows, and it is feared that many perished by smoke and fire. In the upper stories—beyond the reach of assistance—were about eighty servants. It is doubtful if many of them escaped; for the entire upper part of the building was in flames when the fire was first discovered. Below are lists of the rescued and lost so far as ascertained.

## HAIRBREADTH ESCAPES.

THE NUMBER OF KILLED ESTIMATED AT FROM 50 TO 100—DELAY IN GETTING THE ENGINES AND LADDERS AT WORK—PATHETIC SCENES.

St. Louis, Mo., April 11.—At 1:25 o'clock this morning the Southern Hotel was discovered to be on fire. The flames had evidently been at work for some time, for when the alarm was sounded, which was no doubt at the moment of discovery, the entire upper portion of the building was on fire. The flames were bursting from the roof, forth in dense volumes. The scene which presented itself when THE TRIBUNE correspondent arrived upon the ground fairly beggars description, and cannot be presented with all its horrors. The greater number of rooms on the two upper floors were occupied by permanent boarders. These, awakened from their sleep by the terrible cry of fire and almost suffocated by the dense smoke as it forced its way through the halls and rendered exit by them extremely hazardous, if not impossible—rushed to the windows, and throwing them open, cried in agonized tones for help. Then the streets could see, but could render no assistance further than to cry, "Hold on! hold on! Don't jump. We'll try and get you out."

The hook and ladder wagons came, but there was seemingly an interminable delay in getting to work, and, without exaggeration, to the spectators who partook of the prevailing excitement it seemed as though the department was without its usual efficiency, and that assistance would never be rendered. The poor creatures hanging from the upper windows continued their cries, which smote upon the ears of their helpless hearers below with such force as can better be imagined than described.

At last, when it seemed as though the flames had gained almost full possession of the sixth story, the ladders were brought into requisition; but they were far too short, the longest scarcely reaching beyond the fourth floor.

The cries of "Help! Help!" as they rang forth from all sides, seemed to paralyze the firemen as well as the others who were lookers-on. Some one with a cool head suggested that the longest ladders be raised to the top of the Walnut-st. verandah, which would have the effect of lengthening them by two stories. This was done, and by it many were saved. From the busy workers about the debris there was but one opinion, and that the numbers reported lost are by one-half too low in estimation. "I'll tell you what," said one sturdy worker, "I worked at removing the bodies at the Brooklyn Theatre, and we didn't think there were over a dozen burned, and when the fire is down and we get to work here, it's my honest opinion the people will be surprised. It is of course impossible to approximate the number lost in the fire, but the prevailing supposition is that not less than 50, and perhaps 100, persons lie buried in the general demolition. A record of those saved is being kept at the Lindell Hotel; but thus far not more than 50 persons, who were in the Southern last night have signed it. It is reported that Edward Kerre, the French Consul at Chicago, arrived in the city last night and put up at the Southern. As no word can be obtained concerning him, many believe that he perished in the flames. Among the fortunate ones who escaped the fiery element at the Southern was E. J. Gumpert, esq., of New-York, agent for Blood's needles. He pushed through a suffocating smoke, which almost took his breath, and reached the street in safety.

Miss Kate Claxton's experiences with the fiery element have been the means of making her a most notable person. She was a prominent figure in the record of the terrible Brooklyn fire, where several hundred lives were lost, and her visit to St. Louis has added to her reputation for good fortune in time of peril. Thus far during her present engagement of "The Two Orphans" at the Olympic, she has been quartered at the Southern and occupied a room on the third floor. She was awakened from a sound sleep by a loud cry of "fire" from the hall. Jumping out of bed, she groped her way to the door and opened it to find the place was dense with smoke and that immediate action was necessary. Slipping into the scantiest of garments, she threw up one of the windows to ascertain the chance of escaping by that route, and, finding it was decidedly slender, she concluded her only hope of escape lay by the hallway. People were screaming and hurrying past her door, and she determined in an instant to cast her lot with them. There were no lights, and what was done had to be done in darkness. Entering the hall, she hurried in the direction of the stairway, and, before proceeding far, was materially assisted by a gentleman, who seized hold of her arm and pushed her along. With a proper appreciation of the need for haste, when she came to stairway she fell down and rolled for some distance after getting to the bottom, but not being badly hurt, was able to pick herself up expeditiously and make her escape. She lost every article of clothing she had in the hotel save what she had on. Mr. Joseph Pulitzer occupied rooms 301 and 305. He escaped almost naked. His statement to the reporter was rather brief and interesting. He returned to the hotel at about 11:30 o'clock from a congenial tea-party at Mrs. Morrison's house, where, in company with Senator Bogy, the Hon. Erastus Wells, Mr. Canfield of Chicago, Gen. Clark, the member of Congress, and others, he had spent a very pleasant evening. After a chat with Mr. Herman Linde, a famous German reader, who had just returned from the front, he remained perfectly quiet until he heard the shrieks of women on the floor below. He went out without dressing, and found the staircase and corridor thoroughly filled with smoke. He never returned to his room, and was nearly choked to death when he reached the exit on Fifth-st. Mr. Pulitzer thinks that the alarm bell never was sounded inside of the hotel, and people on the street told him the fire was observed from the street nearly 20 minutes before the

fire alarm was given. The loss of life, Mr. Pulitzer thinks, will probably prove great.

A most pathetic scene was witnessed by many of the spectators on the Fourth-st. side. Just as the danger appeared most imminent, in the fifth-story window, upon a background of lurid flame, might be seen the profiles of a man and woman, shaking hands and taking a last farewell of each other. They had stood at the window and appealed for aid until hope gave out, and—just when they felt the volumes of smoke overwhelming them and saw the flames apparently stretching toward them with rapid strides—they felt into each other's arms, and were evidently prepared for the worst.

The scenes in the saloons where the rescued persons were placed temporarily were most heart-rending. Many swooned when they realized the danger they had passed. Many were injured in the crush; most of them were in a wretchedly forlorn condition as to clothing, and in some of the saloons the dead and dying were stretched out waiting the coming of friends. A thrilling scene was witnessed at the east front at about 2:30 o'clock. A number of people had been taken out of that portion of the building by means of the Skinner truck, which had then been removed, it being supposed that that side had been emptied of its inmates. Suddenly at one of the windows on the fourth floor a man appeared in a night-dress. Glancing around he seemed to realize his situation perfectly. The ladder had been taken away, and below him was a sheer descent of 60 feet. To jump was certain death. "What shall I do?" he asked. "Stay where you are," answered the crowd, aroused to a clear appreciation of the imminence of the danger, and of the possibility of securing help. "God deliver me!" he exclaimed, looking up at the lurid sky, and down at the dark and churning sea of flames. He looked up at the sky and clasped his hands in prayer: "Lord, for Jesus sake," could be easily heard by the throng below, calmed into perfect silence. It seemed hours before the truck was brought. It must have seemed centuries to the lonely man, standing at the darkened window, lighted by an occasional flash from the flames around him, and startled by the crash that came here and there, of falling walls. "Lord, for Jesus sake," he cried. "Stand where you are," said fifty voices. The truck finally came and was slowly and clumsily raised to the window. Two firemen went up and put the man on the ladder. He came down slowly, his limbs trembling beneath him. At the bottom he raised himself up to his full height. "Hurrah for St. Louis," he cried. "New-York ain't dead yet." Then raising his hand up to the sky, he said in a lower tone: "Lord forgive me for every sin that I have ever committed. To think of having your door opened with a cry, and find the whole building on fire, and then to get out! Lord I thank thee! I have been in fires before, and in battles and fights, but this beats all!" He was too much excited to give any rational account of himself, and was hurried away in an overcoat which had to be forced on his shoulders and held there by the two strong firemen who escorted him to a place of safety.

Miss Claxton lost everything—her wardrobe, and what she valued most, a number of valuable papers, &c., which she had preserved for a long time, and whose loss is a severe one. The clothing she had on had been loaned her by kind friends; and while the reporter was speaking with her maid entered with a small package, which evidently contained some garments, and for which Miss Claxton returned her thanks.

## THE ESCAPE OF MR. TYSON.

A MARVELLOUS CASE OF PRESENCE OF MIND—EFFORTS TO SAVE OTHERS WHILE HIMSELF IN DANGER.

St. Louis, April 11.—The escape of Edward P. Tyson of New-York may be said to be owing to his remarkable coolness and presence of mind. He says he was awakened by hearing a noise as of somebody scuffling or quarrelling in the hall. The smoke and fumes of fire very quickly told him the whole story. Instead of madly rushing into the hall and endeavoring to make his way through the smoke and flames, he closed his room door, got up and shut the transom above, and then coolly proceeded to dress himself.

He says that it took only a few moments of thought to convince him that his road to safety was out of his bedroom window and not through the hallways. He went to the beds, of which there were two in his room. Taking the blankets from them he cut them into strips, to make a rope, with which he intended to lower himself to the one-story building, immediately under his window. After he had tied his blanket strips together he went over all the knots again and thoroughly tested them to make sure they would not slip. Then, to be certain of having enough of rope to reach the ground, he took the counterpane of the bed and added them to the blanket strips.

People appeared on the roof of the building immediately underneath him and prepared to get a rope to him. Then he let down his bedclothes rope and hauled up first a small transom rope and then a larger one. This done, he endeavored to throw the small rope still attached to the large one to the window at which were the women above him. After a number of unsuccessful attempts he detached the small rope from the large one, and fastening the latter to the leg of his bedstead succeeded in throwing the small end to the women, who managed to catch it at last. It dangled down a long way from the ground however, and was practically of no use to them.

Mr. Tyson then prepared to descend to the ground. He pitched his valise and trunk out of the window. He got down to the sill of the window in the story below, and stopped there for a moment to get a better grasp of the rope, and then went on down, hand-over-hand, reaching the ground without a scratch or injury of any kind.

## SCENES AT THE FIRE.

RAPID SPREAD OF THE FLAMES—ROOMS AND CORRIDORS FILLED WITH BLENDING SMOKE—FRANTIC GUESTS JUMP FROM HIGH WINDOWS—FEARS THAT MANY WERE KILLED.

St. Louis, Mo., April 11.—At about half past 11 this morning the Southern Hotel, on Walnut, Fourth, Elm and Fifth-sts., was found to be on fire. The alarm was given at once, and every effort was made to rouse the sleeping inmates. The Southern Hotel was one of the finest and most popular in the city, and was well filled, though, as the register has been burned, it is impossible now to ascertain how many people were in the burning building. The Salvage Corps responded to the alarm before it was sounded on the city bells, and before the engines arrived the entire upper stories were in flames.

At 2 o'clock the scenes in the immediate vicinity of the hotel were indescribable, the excitement being of the most intense character. The windows in the upper stories were crowded with shrieking men and women, whom it seemed impossible to save. A few were rescued by ladders placed in the Fourth-st. portico, but on the other three sides of the building—bounded by Fifth, Walnut, and Elm-sts.—the longest ladders fell far short of reaching the windows. Mr. Peter Blow, son of the former Minister to Brazil, was sleeping in his room on the sixth floor, and succeeded, after strenuous exertions, in escaping with a broken arm. The building was six stories in height, and Mr. Blow thinks that the majority of the inmates of the two upper stories of the hotel were crowded with shrieking men and women, whom it seemed impossible to save. 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